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## CASD Bulletin No. 2018-01

To: All Electric and Gas Utilities

From: Susan E. Cottle, Deputy Director  
Consumer Assistance & Safety Division (CASD)

Subject: Ch 815 Section 8 (E)—Notifying Customers and CASD of Billing Errors

Date: January 23, 2018

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Chapter 815 Section 8 (E) covers some essential information about what a utility needs to do when it learns of a possible billing error. Because of some recent questions that several utilities have had about billing errors, the timing of reporting them, etc., this bulletin is being issued to **highlight** some key points to ensure your utility has the information it needs to handle notifications and corrections in particular as needed.

- **Utilities must notify customers promptly and in writing:**

More specifically, the rule states: *A utility shall notify promptly a customer in writing of a billing error after it discovers or is notified of the error. An explanation of the credit or charge on the bill or in a bill insert that accompanies the bill containing the credit or charge that explains the error will meet the notice requirement of this Section.*

- **Utilities must correct the error within 45 days and find out if other customers are affected:**

More specifically, the rule states: *The utility shall correct the error within 45 days of discovery or notice and investigate the possibility that the billing error may affect multiple customers. Discovery of the error is the point in time when the utility first becomes aware of the billing error; or, if notice of the error is provided by a third party, discovery of the error is when the utility confirms that a billing error was made. In the latter situation, the decision regarding whether or not a billing error occurred must be made within 14 days of the utility's receipt of the third party's notice of the error. **Please note:** It is very important to review what has caused the error. Once the cause is determined, it is important to research whether that cause may have affected other accounts. For example, a new employee may have unknowingly made a mistake more than once before the mistake was discovered. Similarly, a computer system error is unlikely to have affected only one account.*

- **Utilities must notify CASD immediately if more than 10 customers are affected:**

More specifically, the rule states: *If more than 10 customers are affected by the billing error, the utility shall immediately notify the CAD [now CASD]. **Please note:** We always find it helpful to be aware of any billing error, large or small, because that information enables us to help your consumers better and in many instances, can keep a small issue from becoming a larger one than need be. But any error that affects more than 10 consumers is one you must tell us about immediately. The best way to do this is to contact me directly by phone (207-287-4934) or by email ([susan.cottle@maine.gov](mailto:susan.cottle@maine.gov)). I can learn from you about the error and what's happening, ask you any questions so I can be sure to understand the circumstances, keep our staff up to speed, and perhaps be able to help with any questions or concerns you may have about any requirements. If you don't have all the facts just yet when you learn of the error, that's okay. We understand that tracking down what's happened can sometimes take a bit of time. But do not leave us uninformed once you know there is an error.*

If any portion of Chapter 815 Section 8 (E) raises any questions or concerns for you, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience. Thank you for your attention to this.